

1944 · SEASON · 1945

LOUISVILLE
PHILHARMONIC
ORCHESTRA

ROBERT WHITNEY, Conductor

NOVEMBER 28th and 29th

LOUISVILLE MEMORIAL AUDITORIUM

Program

SECOND PAIR

Tuesday evening, November 28

Wednesday evening, November 29



THE LOUISVILLE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY

PRESENTS

The Louisville Philharmonic Orchestra

SOLOIST: ALEXANDER UNINSKY, PIANIST



WAGNER.....INTRODUCTION TO ACT III "LOHENGRIN"

BRAHMS.....SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN C MINOR

Un poco sostenuto-allegro

Andante sostenuto

Un poco allegretto e grazioso

Adagio-allegro non troppo, ma con brio

Intermission

TCHAIKOVSKY.....CONCERTO NO. 1 IN B FLAT MINOR
for piano and orchestra

Allegro non troppo e molto maestoso-
allegro con spirito

Andantino simple

Allegro con fuoco

The STEINWAY is the Official Piano of the
Louisville Philharmonic Orchestra

Notes on the Program

BY FANNY BRANDEIS

RICHARD WAGNER
(1813-1883)

PRELUD TO ACT III, LOHENGRIN

The second act of "Lohengrin" closes with the procession to the Church for the marriage of Elsa and Lohengrin. The curtain falls as they cross the threshold, and when it lifts for the third act, we hear the famous bridal chorus, sung by attendants and guests, as the couple enter their castle room. The Prelude to the third act, with the rising tones of the trombones and the soaring spirit of felicitation, expresses the emotions of relief and happiness of all who had been concerned with Elsa's plight and rejoiced at her miraculous rescue by the Knight of the Swan. There is an exquisite middle section, with woodwinds singing a tender air, but the chief essence of the short piece is virility, and it ends, as it begins, with brass proclaiming again the triumphant opening theme.

JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

SYMPHONY NO. 1 IN C MINOR, OP. 68

In the summer that Brahms was twenty he went to Dusseldorf to visit Robert Schumann, then at the height of his fame. Brahms played for him his first piano Sonata, Opus 1, and Schumann sent a message to Clara, his wife, saying, "Come, you will hear such music as you have never heard before." This is interesting, for it proves that Schumann recognized at once in what, compared to his later works, is one of Brahms' weakest compositions, the marked genius of the young man who had come so diffidently to him—the great composer who matured so slowly, and exercised such patience and restraint before invading the field of large orchestral compositions that Schumann was long since dead, and could not know the complete vindication of his immediate judgment.

Brahms was forty-three when he completed and performed his first symphony. For years the scheme of it and various themes had been developing (one he had used in a movement for violin and piano composed as a gift for Schumann, twenty years earlier) but it was characteristic of him that the work was not released until it fulfilled the rigorous standards he always demanded of himself.

The Symphony opens with a long, slow Introduction. There is nothing extraneous here, nothing that is dispensed with in the *Allegro*. The first violins move chromatically C, C sharp, D, over an inexorable beat of kettledrum and basses, a progression used throughout the movement. The *Allegro* is announced by a strong blow of the kettledrum. The chief theme given out by violins, ascending in broad steps, is enunciated with incalculable vigor. In this movement it is the rhythm that stands out, and a tremendous sense of power and drive. With the perfect sense of unity of structure, of which Brahms was ever a master, the movement closes as it opens, *Poco Sostenuto*, with the symmetry of an arch that rises and descends to the same level. Again there is the reiterated C by drums and basses, while the violins climb slowly and dramatically to a stern closing.

The *Andante*, beginning quietly with a song of great purity, develops an extraordinary intensity of feeling in the first ten bars. There are haunting passages for oboe and clarinet, and later a solo violin enters with the horn, first to sing the opening theme, and then, while the horn continues its song, to soar above in a short rhapsody and maintain its solitary way to a calm ending.

"Grazioso" is a perfect word to describe the charm of the clarinet song which begins the third movement, and the gracious way it is joined by other winds over a soft flurry of notes from the strings. Brahms, as other of the Romantic composers, departed from the traditional *Minuet*, though a lightness of spirit in the music is akin to the classic form, and a middle section, in which the music becomes quite agitated, corresponds to the *Trio* of the conventional third movement. After this the clarinet repeats the opening song, and growing "little by little more tranquil" this exquisite movement comes to a dreamy close.

The slow Introduction to the last movement opens with a dark version of the theme that later becomes the pure embodiment of sunlight. Out of the somber violence of this Introduction emerges a section of such magical beauty that it must ever find its special place in the hearts of all music lovers. Over tremulous tones of the strings there is a passionate horn call which, once heard, is unforgettable. With the same intensity it is repeated by the flute, then with absolute inevitability, trombones intone a chorale four bars in length; into these sounds is compressed all the fervor of Brahms' religion. The horn calls once more and as the tones float off in veiled quiet, it is as if mists roll away and the sun shines forth. In strong C major the strings give out the theme that was suggested in the Introduction and as the full orchestra takes it up, a feeling of complete freedom pervades the music. The whole movement is joyous; the second theme, more lyric than the first, is but another voice in the same rich, emotional pattern. Fragments of the horn call break through, to remind us of the lofty spirit of the Introduction, and just before the end of the movement, in the full energy of the Coda, the chorale is again proclaimed, by strings and brass, in a noble affirmation of faith and joy.

Notes on the Program—Continued

PETER ILITCH TCHAIKOVSKY
(1840-1897)

The way of Tchaikovsky with his compositions was often hard, and he seems to have been particularly crushed by the harsh criticism of the eminent pianist Nicolas Rubinstein, when he brought him his first piano concerto. Tchaikovsky had asked to be allowed to play it for Rubinstein, for, (as he wrote his patron Mme. Von Meck) he needed "the advice of a severe critic who at the same time was friendly disposed to me." The critic was too severe and in his anger and hurt feelings, Tchaikovsky erased Rubinstein's name from the dedication and offered it to Hans Von Bulow. That artist, who had amazingly and boldly championed the music of the two irreconcilables, Wagner and Brahms, accepted the dedication with words of high praise, and gave the Concerto its first performance in Boston, in 1875.

The Concerto opens with a long, majestic Introduction; the piano enters with great chords flung like a challenge across the broad theme of the strings. The time quickens and the first theme proper, based on an Ukrainian folk song, is heard. The climax of the movement is built by the orchestra, and new material, very Slavic, is used before a long cadenza brings a brilliant close.

The second movement combines the qualities of slow movement and *Scherzo*. A flute gives out a melting song which the piano takes up and embellishes. The *Scherzo* breaks in, the orchestra playing a vivacious waltz against the piano's tracery. A cadenza leads to a repetition of the slow section. The piano boldly opens the final *Allegro* with a brilliant mazurka, which returns often, always with reckless energy. But another theme vies with it in importance—a broad melody, warm and rich. The Coda, based upon these two melodies, brings a dynamic end to the Concerto.

Let us consider these three great contemporaries of the 19th century. Each was a Romantic, yet each approached his art in an entirely individual and diametrically opposed way; Wagner the operatic writer, Brahms the symphonist and composer of Chamber music, and Tchaikovsky, the eclectic of the three, equally expressive in opera or for orchestra.

Wagner was the most original. He broke into new fields; there was no music drama, as such, before him, and the extent of his influence on the music to come only ended with the first World War, when the opposition to the German mind and philosophy he expressed became fixed. Brahms, the lineal descendant of Beethoven, in spite of his romantic approach, was still the classicist, if we accept Donald Tovey's statement that Classicism means "a specific form of 'maturity,' the condition of things in which the style is the straightforward result of the matter, and the matter is self-consistent . . . and suitable for artistic treatment." Consider the compositions of Brahms, and it must be admitted they measure up to this definition. Tchaikovsky's music is almost autobiographical, so personal it is, and in his insistence on the predominance of sensation over intellect and expressiveness over formal balance and proportion, his music is the most romantic of the three.

Personally they differed interestingly in their attitudes to their own work. Wagner seems always to have been satisfied with each opera as it emerged; Brahms almost never found the result equal to his demands, and generously accepted criticism from those whom he most respected (Clara Schumann and Elisabeth von Herzogenberg, particularly) and made changes as they suggested. Tchaikovsky suffered agonies in the emotions of composing but usually found his compositions good and praised them, while Brahms spoke belittlingly of his.

Brahms and Tchaikovsky admired one another personally, though they had little understanding of each other's work, for to Brahms, form and thematic material were equally important, while to Tchaikovsky, the melody was the thing. Unlike Brahms, he seldom actually developed a theme, resorting to repetition, with contrasting orchestration, to create variety. Both had no use for Wagner, and he was sneering towards the Russian and disdained the German. The discussion could be extended endlessly; it might be enlightening and entertaining to contrast three contemporary composers of the 20th century. What shall we say about Stravinsky, Hindemith and Shostakovich? Can we find a parallel?

CONCERTO NO. 1 IN B FLAT MINOR

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